

The guns were Mr. W. M. Petric of Ralli Bros., Mr. K. A. Lister Kaye, R.A.F., and myself. The going was very hard and the wind a northern one and strong. The shoot began at 10 a.m. and finished at about 5-15 p.m. with breaks as shewn below.

The first stop was for about 20 minutes, the second for about 45 and the third for 15.

The Snipe were all in excellent condition and the main proportion Fantails with a few Jacks, six "Painters" were also included in the bag as we understood Mr. Stuart Baker classifies this in his "Game Birds" as a Snipe although doubtful.

307 Head of Snipe.

	1st Stop 11 a.m.	2nd Stop 1-30 p.m.	3rd Stop 4 p.m.	Final.	Total.
Mr. Petric ..	19	31	23	27	100
„ Kaye ..	17	44	24	22	107
„ Rubie ..	18	37	22	23	100

KARACHI.

C. B. RUBIE.

3rd January 1923.

No. XXX.—PLUMAGE DISPLAY BY THE SIRKEER CUCKOO
(*T. LESCHENAULTI*.)

Plumage display amongst certain species of birds seems to be sufficiently well known, but it may interest readers to know that I have recently observed the peculiarity in the Sirkeer Cuckoo, a bird of remarkably sober plumage when in repose.

The curious courtship of a pair which I watched the other morning savoured rather of the grotesque; but it was a revelation of the curious brown and white patchwork effect which such a sober-plumaged bird could produce. The scene was enacted on an open plain, both birds giving vent to curious clicking sounds. But while the hen took short runs along the ground with her head held low the cock would circle round her with drooping wings and outspread tail, a position in which the patchwork patterns were most conspicuous. At the end of each run he would touch the ground with his bill, and then raise it slowly skywards, remaining in that position for a minute or more before repeating the performance. This plumage display continued for about twenty minutes, after which both birds began pruning their feathers as though nothing had happened.

GHAZIPUR,

E. H. GILL.

7th June 1922.

No. XXXI.—NOTES ON TURTLES.

For some time I have been trying to collect some specimens of giant turtles that visit this coast yearly for a period of one to two months during apparently the period of oviposition as I have always heard from the natives of their immense size which I have found it difficult to credit. I have been stationed in Quilon on

and off since 1906, and was at one time here for nearly five years consecutively but have never once seen a specimen. About three weeks ago one came up on the beach very close to my bungalow during the night and laid 190 eggs in the sand, on examining the place next morning I found the size of the excavation very large, some six feet in diameter. I got one of the eggs, the rest being taken by some fisherman. The egg was round like a tennis-ball, with the exception of an indentation of one inch square, white, measuring $3\frac{1}{4}$ inches in diameter, the covering was not of shell but composed of thick skin flexible to the touch. I had men on the lookout for the reptile's return or others, but unfortunately whilst away in camp another, or the same one, came up on the beach and was caught and killed and eaten. Again yesterday morning one was brought me on a cart alive which had been caught out at sea in a net specially prepared for the purpose. It was of an immense size just over seven feet from end to end. I had it taken off the cart with the help of 12 men and even then with great difficulty, as it was found almost impossible to keep the animal still. I directed it to be taken round to an office here for some Europeans to see as I had to go out all day, meaning to have it photographed and properly measured on my return, as I fancy it had been injured too much to survive long. However the coolies apparently got a better offer of Rs. 60 for it in my absence and by the time I was able to trace it, it had been killed and cut up. Having myself seen this specimen I was able to look it up and find its description tallies very nearly with that of the *Sphargidæ* which includes a single genus and species, the well known Leathery Turtle, (*D. coriacea*). It differed from all other Chelonians by having its carapace formed by ossifications of the skin only, the bony deposits appeared to be arranged like mosaic with several longitudinal ridges of larger osseous tubercles; the limbs were something like those of other marine turtles, all destitute of claws, the two front ones narrow and fin shaped and quite smooth with a black hard surface, the two back ones very flat and broad.

After making many enquiries on the subject, the fishermen of the coast here tell me that up to 25 years ago these large turtles were quite common here and during this period of the year some forty odd would be caught annually either when attempting to come ashore or from specially prepared nets out at sea. They say that for the last 7 to 10 years they are only seen occasionally and some two or so caught annually. They appear to frequent the outskirts of the Tangacheri reef some two miles away, which extends some distance to the south-west and west of the point and along the coast to the Northward, $8^{\circ}54' N.$ Lat. and $76^{\circ}37' E.$ Long. Whilst referring to some of your Journals for information, I came across a description of the Giant Tortoise, and would draw your attention to the measurements given (in Vol. xxvi, No. 3, p. 861) regarding the shell of a specimen which is said to measure 46'5" in length and weigh 593 lbs., there is obviously some mistake here, as the specimen of turtle I saw measured over 7' over all, and I should say by the number of men it took to handle it must have weighed at least 600 lbs. alive.

QUILON, TRAVANCORE,
SOUTH INDIA.

T. H. CAMERON,
D.S.P., QUILON.

[The correct length was 46.5 inches as pointed out in the errata published for Volume XXVI.—EDITORS.]

No. XXXII.—“CATCHING CROCODILES.”

(With a plate.)

To the popular mind, there are probably few more repulsive animals than the crocodile, and, though his habits may be regarded as essentially lazy, by reason of his passion for basking in the sun, he is usually considered aggressive enough